

*An Invitation to Participate in the  
AREDAY Climate and Energy Literacy Initiative  
(ACELI)*



The AREDAY Climate and Energy Literacy Initiative (ACELI) is a new collaborative effort building upon the AREDAY community in partnership with the Climate Literacy Network to engage public and private sectors, government agencies, NGO's and communication and entertainment experts.

Intended to broaden the conversation and fill gaps in public understanding of climate and energy related science and solutions, ACELI's goal is to inform and educate the public, especially youth, in order to substantially and measurably increase our individual and collective climate and energy awareness and literacy by synthesizing and popularizing climate and energy education and information.

By helping foster an environment in popular culture — a “climate of change” — that builds on and adds value to these existing efforts, ACELI will make being climate-smart and energy-wise “cool” in popular culture through the talents and reach of the communication and entertainment industries, thereby substantially turning the tide of climate confusion and energy illiteracy that have held this nation hostage for decades.

Through AREDAY's strong alliances in Hollywood and in the film industry and the Climate Literacy Network's partnerships with climate and energy educators and scientists, we intend to engage every form of media including film, television, newsprint, Internet, and various social media outlets in order to enlighten the public about the actual threats and widespread impacts of climate change while empowering them in practical, effective practices.

While ACELI has the potential to reach hundreds of millions if not billions of people around the world, the target audience of ACELI is youth, especially youth leaders who will lead the next generation into the future. Preparing the young people today for the massive energy and climate challenges of the future is ACELI's primary purpose.

### **Background**

While a strong majority of Americans recognize climate change is occurring and support federal and business efforts to counter it, the fact remains that there are substantial gaps in our collective understanding of the basics of climate, the carbon cycle, our energy consumption, and the interconnections between them all. As a nation and a planet, we haven't connected the dots in our minds or closed the loop in the causes and effects of burning buried solar energy, (i.e. fossil fuels.) Now, society's often well-intended efforts to improve our quality of living and grow the economy for increased prosperity are seriously impacting the Earth's environmental health for Centuries to come.

As has been pointed out by numerous observers, the twin challenges of climate change and our deeply rooted dependence on fossil fuels are massively challenging to address, like the ultimate Hollywood Monster that must be fought with courage and cleverness. Indeed, the convergence of climate and energy crises must be countered with awareness, intelligence and inspiring, creative solutions. Positive visions of the future are imperative, but neither scientists, who sometimes tilt toward alarm, nor Hollywood, which tends to glamorize post-apocalyptic scenarios, have provided the needed positive, proactive view of the future. Crucially, focusing on and empowering youth who are already making a difference is essential.

Most Americans and many people around the world don't know how long it takes the Earth to orbit the Sun, or where their electricity or oil and natural gas originate... or what the environmental and climate consequences of burning fossil fuels really are. This, to large degree, is due to the lack of climate and energy education in formal curriculum, but also because—with a few notable exceptions—climate and energy topics are rarely covered in popular culture and mass media.

To be sure, the lack of climate literacy and energy awareness is due to many factors, ineffective education and supporting mass media among them. But youth in particular have not been well served or prepared for the changes in climate and energy consumption that are already well underway. The imperative is this: as a nation and a planet, we must substantially increase our individual and collective climate and energy literacy in order to fight the climate and energy monster, our post-modern Frankenstein that we, in fact, have created, however unintentionally.

Recognizing the urgent need to prepare now for global change that will impact climate, ecosystems and energy use, the proposed AREDAY Climate and Energy Literacy Initiative (ACELI) will serve as a public-private collaboration to substantially and measurably increase public awareness of climate and energy science and solutions in order to foster resiliency and sustainable practices throughout society. In recent years the Federal Government has invested over \$30 Billion in climate research during the George W. Bush years alone, and more recently Climate Change Education has been made a Presidential Priority. Billions of dollars are being invested in Clean Energy technology and workforce development and over \$70 million in grants have been issued through NASA, the National Science Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration going to develop climate change education programs.

ACELI will leverage these existing programs and initiatives, fostering synergistic activities and opportunities between partners.

### **Scope of Work**

Understanding climate change science basics and appreciating the complexity and fragility of our current energy infrastructure is an IQ test that most Americans fail. The AREDAY Climate and Energy Literacy Initiative will penetrate both popular culture and formal educational systems, elevating the understanding of climate change and providing effective insights and strategies to achieve personal and collective action toward a dynamic and sustainable future. ACELI proposes the following course of action to educate America in order to effectively mobilize political will and innovation to combat climate change.

1. Support efforts to integrate climate change education and energy awareness in formal and informal education from the 3rd grade on up to post-graduate level, as well as for the general public;
2. Add depth and support to these efforts by engaging popular culture via the entertainment industry, specifically through the television and motion picture industries.

The majority of people in the United States already consider global warming a serious issue with long-term consequences that should be addressed, and they also recognize that our dependence on fossil fuels is problematic on many levels. AREDAY through ACELI is proposing to reach this large population in the U.S. by bringing together writers, directors and actors through movies and television. This important segment of the population desires more information on global warming, and the film and entertainment industry has the means to educate them about climate change.

ACELI will reach out to educators and film-makers to inform communities about the science of climate change, and as a result, organize and mobilize them to take action to solve and prevent further negative impacts of climate change. Species extinction, dependence on oil, desertification and rising waters, and the subsequent consequences of job losses, climate refugees, and food shortages will go unchecked without education through all sources and medias.

We invite you to join ACELI to help develop and fund this initiative of educating and mobilizing America on climate change. Your partnership will help:

- Tailor, develop, disseminate, and apply materials in both formal and informal education venues;
- Evaluate, refine and fund educational materials, practices and programs;
- Share best practice ideas and resources.

AREDAY is not just one day per year, but it's every day. The focus of this opportunity is to promote collaboration, not competition - because resolving climate change will not fall on the shoulders of one person, corporation, or government. It will take all of us at all levels of society to bring about the solutions to global warming and its potentially dire impacts upon the planet. Education is the key to allow individuals and organizations to take the necessary steps towards solutions in protecting the environment and minimizing climate impacts as part of the human legacy.

ACELI Goals may include

- Infusing climate and energy literacy into motion picture and television programs;
- Developing a global Climate Literacy & Energy Awareness Network (CLEAN) to share creative ideas and best practices;
- Sharing a positive, empowered view of the future through sustainable practices such as Green Schools, Permaculture and urban agriculture and forestry;
- Insuring that solutions are equitable and accessible.

For more information please contact AREDAY Director, Chip Comins, (970) 948-9929, [info@areday.net](mailto:info@areday.net) or Climate Literacy Network co-founder Mark McCaffrey, (303) 665.0205, [mark.mccaffrey@colorado.edu](mailto:mark.mccaffrey@colorado.edu)